

**Meeting the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as  
Reauthorized in 2001 for  
"Highly Qualified Teachers"  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) October 2006  
*Modified August 2009***

This document contains general questions and answers directly related to the requirements for "Highly Qualified Teachers" as defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 as reauthorized in 2001, Sections 1119 and 9101(11 and 23). For specific information about Montana teacher licensure and endorsement requirements please contact the Montana Educator Licensure Unit at the Office of Public Instruction Web site at [www.opi.mt.gov/cert](http://www.opi.mt.gov/cert) or by telephone at (406) 444-3150.

**1. What does the term "Highly Qualified Teacher" mean?**

"Highly Qualified Teacher" is a term defined in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and focuses on three characteristics: 1) possession of a bachelor's degree; 2) holds a teaching license (some exceptions apply); and 3) has demonstrated content knowledge in each subject taught.

Under the ESEA, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) requires each state to define a "Highly Qualified Teacher" based on statute and guidelines developed by the ED. The ED requires states to file a definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher," accompanied by data to demonstrate that each teacher meets the state's approved definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher."

**2. What is Montana's definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

Montana teachers who hold a Montana license and are teaching in their endorsed subjects, in most instances, meet Montana's definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher." The requirement that teachers be "Highly Qualified" applies to all public elementary and secondary school teachers who teach a "core academic subject class" and are employed by Montana school districts. Specific instances for which exceptions do apply include: secondary teachers teaching "core academic subjects" with a minor (questions 7 and 8), teachers teaching in the middle grades 5-8 (questions 9 and 10), elementary teachers teaching under a Class 5 Alternative License (question 11), and special education teachers teaching core academic subject classes (questions 18-23).

The term "core academic subjects," as defined by ESEA, means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, visual arts, history, and geography.

### 3. What does "HOUSSE" mean?

HOUSSE, as defined by the ESEA Act, means *high objective uniform state standard of evaluation*. Each state is permitted, under ESEA, to develop standards by which its experienced\* teachers are determined to meet the ESEA requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers.

*\*"Experienced" means a teacher with one or more years of teaching.*

### 4. If I hold an active Montana teaching license do I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?

If you hold an active Montana teaching license and are teaching in your endorsed area(s), in most instances, you meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher."

### 5. When I complete a Montana educator preparation program I plan to seek a Montana license. Will I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?

**Elementary Teachers New to the Profession\*** If, as an elementary teacher new to the profession and licensed effective on or after July 1, 2006, you:

- hold at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university; and
- complete a Montana Board of Public Education accredited professional educator preparation program;
- earn a minimum combined score of 8 based on a multi-dimensional content test\* embedded in the educator preparation program as a condition for recommending new teachers for licensure;
- obtain a Montana license (recommendation for licensure and endorsement by an accredited professional education unit), and
- teach in your licensed and endorsed subject area.

**Then,** you meet ESEA's requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher."

*\*The test includes:*

- 1) *grade-point average on at least 30 hours of postsecondary content course work;*
- 2) *performance-based assessments of content knowledge and skill conducted by a cooperating teacher and university supervisor; and*
- 3) *performance on the Praxis II Elementary content knowledge test.*

**Secondary Teachers New to the Profession\*** If, as a licensed secondary teacher new to the profession, you:

- hold at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university; and
- complete a Montana Board of Public Education accredited professional educator preparation program with a major in an endorsable subject, (or the course work equivalent to a major, or hold a minor in a core academic subject and pass the Praxis II content knowledge test); and
- are recommended for licensure by the accredited professional education unit you completed; and

- obtain a Montana license and endorsement based on the above criteria, and
- teach in the endorsed subject area.

**Then**, you meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher."

*\*A teacher new to the profession means a teacher teaching with less than one year of experience.*

## **6. Do I meet the ESEA requirements of a highly qualified teacher if I teach multiple core academic subject classes but I only have an endorsement in one of these subjects?**

If a secondary teacher teaching multiple core academic subject classes meets the requirements for HQ in one subject and if the school in which this teacher teaches is eligible to participate in the Small, Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA), then the teacher has three years from the date of hire to complete the HQ requirements for additional subjects. See the policy letter from the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/040331.html>. The list of eligible LEAs for the upcoming school year is located here: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/eligible09/index.html>.

## **7. Will I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher" if I complete an approved teaching minor in a "core academic subject"?**

A minor in a core academic subject is not sufficient by itself to allow the teacher to meet the ESEA HQ teacher requirements to teach a core academic subject class. **If** you are new to the profession and recommended by an accredited professional education unit for a secondary license (grades 5-12) endorsed in a "core academic subject" based on completion of an approved teaching minor, **and**, either verify course work equivalent to a major, **or** pass the Praxis II specific content knowledge test; **Then** you meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher."

## **8. As an experienced teacher, do I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher" if I have a minor in a "core academic subject"?**

Again, a minor in a core academic subject is not sufficient by itself to allow the teacher to meet the ESEA HQ teacher requirements to teach a core academic subject class. **If** you are an experienced\* teacher and

- hold an active Montana secondary license (grades 5-12) and are endorsed in an academic major you currently teach, or
- hold a minor in the endorsed "core academic subject" you are teaching, and satisfy the HQT requirements by completing the HOUSSSE,

**Then**, you meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher."

*\*"Experienced" means a teacher with one or more years of teaching.*

**9. If I hold an active Montana elementary license and teach the elementary curriculum in a middle grade (5-8) do I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

A middle grades teacher who holds an active Montana elementary teaching license (K-8) and teaches the elementary curriculum to a specific grade (5-8) in an accredited elementary school (K-8) meets the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher."

**10. If I hold an active Montana secondary license (grades 5-12) and teach a core academic subject in an accredited middle school (grades 5-8), do I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

If you have a major in the core academic subject you teach in an accredited middle school (grades 5-8) and an active Montana secondary license (grades 5-12), then you do meet the definition. **If you do not have a major in the subject taught, you must complete the HOUSSE procedures to determine HQ status for that subject.**

**11. If I hold an active Montana Class 5 Alternative License and teach at the elementary level (K-8), do I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

A teacher with a Class 5 Alternative License teaching at the elementary level (K-8) must pass the elementary content knowledge test prior to teaching elementary curriculum in order to meet the ESEA requirements for "Highly Qualified." **A Class 5 Alternative License is not sufficient by itself** to allow a teacher to teach the elementary curriculum to one or more elementary students (K-8) without meeting the content knowledge verification requirement of ESEA reauthorized. See question 5 for specific requirements for an "Elementary Teacher New to the Profession."

**12. Do school psychologists and counselors who do not teach need to meet the ESEA highly qualified teacher requirements?**

No.

**13. Do teachers of Health Enhancement, Career and Technical Education, and Library need to meet ESEA highly qualified teacher requirements?**

Teachers of the subjects listed above who are not teaching core academic subject classes do not need to meet ESEA highly qualified teacher requirements. The teachers of the subjects listed above must complete the form and check "None of the Above" in section B.

**14. What responsibility does my school district have in meeting Montana's definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act as Reauthorized, Title I, Part A SEC. 1111. <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html>

**15. If I meet another state's approved definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher," do I automatically meet Montana's definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

Teachers who meet another state's approved definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher" **do not automatically** meet Montana's definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher." They must also meet Montana's licensure requirements. For more information, contact the Montana Educator Licensure Unit of the Office of Public Instruction on the OPI Web site at [www.opi.mt.gov/cert](http://www.opi.mt.gov/cert) or by telephone at (406) 444-3150.

**16. If I meet Montana's definition of a "Highly Qualified Teacher," what do I need to become "Highly Qualified" in another state?**

Contact the specific state education agency for "Highly Qualified Teacher" requirements of that state.

**17. If my active Montana educator license includes an endorsement in Broadfield Social Studies, do I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

Teachers with a Broadfield Social Studies endorsement **do meet** the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher," with regard to teaching social studies and, based on preparation in course content in the social studies discipline areas including history, civics and government, geography and economics.

**18. If my active Montana educator license includes an endorsement in Broadfield Science, do I meet the ESEA requirement for a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

Teachers with a Broadfield Science endorsement **do meet** the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher," in Science. Science is considered a core academic subject according to the ESEA Title IX Section 1901 (11).

**19. What are the general requirements to meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher" for special education teachers?**

Teachers at the elementary school level (PK-8):

If a special education teacher is the sole provider to any elementary student for 60 percent or more of the school day, the teacher is considered to be the sole provider of elementary curriculum and must meet the ESEA HQ requirements for the Elementary Level.

Teachers at the secondary school level (grades 9-12) teaching core academic subject classes:

If a special education teacher is the sole provider of a core academic subject class without significant input from another teacher who meets the Federal HQ requirements in that core academic subject, the teacher must meet the HQ requirements of ESEA. Special education teachers who teach core academic subjects must meet the content knowledge requirements that apply to other teachers of core academic subjects.

**20. I hold a Montana K-8 license endorsed in Special Education and I exclusively teach children with disabilities. I am a veteran teacher (one who has been teaching for one year or more). Do I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher" to teach core academic subjects in grades K-12?**

It depends.

Yes. A teacher who holds an active elementary license endorsed in PK-12 special education and teaching at the elementary level (PK-8) meets the ESEA HQ requirements.

Explanation. Teachers at the elementary school level (PK-8). If a special education teacher is the sole provider to any elementary student for 60 percent or more of the school day, the teacher is considered to be the sole provider of elementary curriculum and must meet the ESEA HQ requirements for the Elementary Level.

Maybe. A veteran teacher who holds an active elementary license endorsed in PK-12 special education and teaching core academic subjects at the secondary level (9-12) must demonstrate subject matter competence in the core academic subject he/she teaches to meet the HQ ESEA requirements. The veteran teacher must complete the HOUSSSE to determine HQ status.

Explanation. Teachers at the secondary school level (grades 5-12) teaching core academic subject classes. A special education teacher who is the sole provider of a core academic subject class without significant input from another teacher who meets the federal HQ requirements in that core academic subject, must demonstrate subject matter competence in the subject he/she teaches to meet the HQ requirements of ESEA. Special education teachers who teach core academic subjects at the secondary level must meet the content knowledge requirements that apply to other teachers of core academic subjects.

For a veteran teacher, the content knowledge requirements can be satisfied through the HOUSSE process, through a subject matter test, and other means (e.g., an advanced degree in a core academic subject). (See Question 5 if you are a new teacher.)

**21. I hold a Montana K-8 elementary license endorsed in PK-12 special education and I exclusively teach children with disabilities. I am a new teacher (one who has been teaching for less than one year). Do I meet the ESEA requirements for a “highly qualified teacher” to teach core subjects in grades K-12?**

Like with question 18, the answer depends on whether you’re teaching at the elementary or secondary level.

Yes. The answer in the case of a teacher at the elementary level is the same whether the teacher is new or veteran. If a special education teacher is the sole provider to any elementary student for 60 percent or more of the school day, the teacher is considered to be the sole provider of elementary curriculum and must meet the ESEA HQ requirements for the Elementary Level.

Maybe. Teachers at the secondary level must demonstrate subject matter competence in the core subject for which they are the sole provider. For new teachers, this is usually done through a major in that subject (or a course work equivalent to a major) or through a subject matter test. HOUSSE is not available to demonstrate subject matter knowledge in the case of a new teacher.

**22. As a special education teacher, I will not be teaching core academic subjects, but instead, I will exclusively provide consultation or collaborative services with general education teachers who meet the ESEA requirement for a "Highly Qualified Teacher." Do I meet the ESEA requirement for a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

If you are not the sole provider of any core academic subject or you are not the sole provider to any elementary student for 60 percent or more of the school day, you do not need to make a determination of HQ status.

**23. As a special education teacher, I teach "core academic subjects" to students with significant cognitive disabilities who qualify for taking the Criterion-Reference Test – Alternate (CRT-Alt). Do I meet the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher"?**

You meet the ESEA HQT requirements in this situation if you:

- hold an active Montana Elementary License (K-8);
- hold a special education PK-12 endorsement;
- are the sole provider of instruction for students with significant disabilities who take the CRT-Alt and none of these children receive instruction above the elementary level; and
- only teach students with significant cognitive disabilities.

**24. I hold a Montana 5-12 license endorsed in a core academic subject and PK-12 special education and I am a teacher new to the profession. I teach multiple "core academic subjects" exclusively to children with disabilities. Do I meet the ESEA requirements for "Highly Qualified Teachers" to teach "core academic subjects" to secondary students with disabilities?**

A secondary level (9-12) special education teacher who is new to the profession and teaches multiple "core academic subjects" exclusively to secondary students with disabilities meets the ESEA requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher" if he/she holds an active Montana secondary teaching license endorsed in PK-12 special education **and** is endorsed with a major or course work equivalent to a major, in language arts, math or science. (This circumstance applies to any core academic subject class the teacher is assigned to teach.) New teachers who meet this requirement have two years from the date of hire to meet ESEA's highly qualified requirements in any additional "core academic" subject they teach. They must use the HOUSSE process to determine highly qualified status in each of these additional core academic subjects following their first year of teaching.

The new federal regulations effective October 13, 2006, implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Information Act of 2004 (IDEA) provide guidance to states' HQT requirements for multi-subject special education teachers. Following a review of the new regulations, the OPI has established a High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) for Special Education teachers consistent with federal regulatory guidance. To maintain "Highly Qualified Teacher" status special education teachers are required to complete the HOUSSE within two years from the date of hire. Teachers working in a rural district who



qualify under the Small Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA, Title VI, and ESEA) must complete the HOUSSE within three years from the date of hire. See the Montana HOUSSE.

**25. Does the HQT Data Collection affect the Quality Educator's Payment to districts?**

No, the two are unrelated.

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**Questions 26-39 Specifically Relate to the Montana Highly Qualified Teacher Survey and HOUSSE Process**

**26. If I am licensed 5-12 Secondary but teach both at the middle school (or 7-8) level and at the high school, which survey do I complete?**

You would complete both the Elementary (K-8) and the Secondary (9-12) HQT surveys.

**27. Must all teachers complete the HQT survey even though they do not teach "core academic subjects"?**

**ALL teachers must complete the HQT survey.** Teachers who do not teach a "core academic subject" as listed on the survey will check "None of the Above" in section B.

**28. If after completing the grade level survey I determine I am not highly qualified, must I complete a High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) process?**

The HOUSSE **must be completed if you do not meet the standard for highly qualified status.** By doing so, you may meet the highly qualified standard through your experience, teacher preparation program, and professional development. HOUSSE is not available to demonstrate subject matter knowledge in the case of a new teacher.\*

*\*A teacher new to the profession means a teacher teaching with less than one year of experience.*

**29. Do I need to complete the HOUSSE process if I teach a core academic subject and have a minor in that area?**

If you teach a core academic subject and do not have a major in that subject, you must complete the HOUSSE (Elementary Curriculum is considered a core academic subject).

**30. What about special education teachers who deliver homebound instruction in a variety of core academic subjects? If they are collaborating with the regular education teacher, would this be considered collaboration even though the instruction is delivered solely by the special education teacher?**

This situation is considered to be a collaborative approach. The special education teacher is not the "sole provider."

**31. If a teacher teaches at more than one location/building, does he/she complete a survey for each building? For example, an itinerant music teacher and health enhancement teachers who travel between buildings.**

Itinerant teachers should complete the HQT survey for each building in which they work. At the elementary level (K-8) these teachers are counted as one teacher teaching one class. At the high school level, these teachers are counted as one teacher then each period taught.

**32. Do special education resource teachers need to complete the HQT survey?**

Special education resource teachers **must complete the HQT survey** appropriate to the level at which they teach. Special education teachers who teach in a K-12 situation must complete both the elementary (K-8) and the secondary (9-12) surveys.

**33. What about self-contained programs at the secondary level where the students spend the majority of their day? The teacher has a special education endorsement (K-12), but delivers the instruction in all of the core academic subjects of English, math, science, social studies. Does this teacher have to have a major in all of those courses? Can this teacher meet the requirement through HOUSSE?**

Secondary special education teachers **must have a major in any core academic subject for which they are the sole provider**. Many teachers meet the ESEA highly qualified requirements through Montana's HOUSSE.

**34. Are replacement classes (e.g., Vocational Math, Language Arts; Applied Math, Language Arts; Applied Science, Social Studies) considered "core academic subject classes"?**

Yes these classes are considered core academic subjects if students are taking these replacement classes to earn high school credit toward graduation.

**35. If I am a PK-12 special education teacher teaching replacement classes (e.g., Vocational Math, Language Arts; Applied Math, Language Arts; Applied Science, Social Studies) to students with disabilities earning high school credit, do I need to meet the ESEA requirements for HQT?**

Yes. A secondary level (9-12) special education teacher who teaches multiple "core academic subjects" as replacement classes exclusively to secondary students with disabilities meets ESEA's requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher" if he/she holds an active Montana secondary teaching license endorsed in PK-12 special education **and** is endorsed with a major or course work equivalent to a major, in language arts, math or science. (This circumstance applies to any core academic subject class, or replacement class, the teacher is assigned to teach.)

New teachers who meet this requirement have two years from the date of hire to meet ESEA's highly qualified requirements in any additional "core academic" subject they teach. They must use the HOUSSE process to determine highly qualified status in each of these additional core academic subjects following their first year of teaching.

**36. If I am a 9-12 ESEA Title I teacher teaching replacement classes (e.g., Vocational Math, Language Arts; Applied Math, Language Arts) to students earning high school credit, do I need to meet the ESEA requirements for HQT?**

Yes. A secondary level (9-12) Title I teacher who teaches multiple "core academic subjects" as replacement classes exclusively to secondary students meets ESEA's requirements for a "Highly Qualified Teacher" if he/she holds an active Montana secondary teaching license **and** is endorsed with a major or course work equivalent to a major, in language arts or math. (This circumstance applies to any core academic subject class, or replacement class, the teacher is assigned to teach.)

New teachers who meet this requirement have two years from the date of hire to meet ESEA's highly qualified requirements in any additional "core academic" subject they teach. They must use the HOUSSE process to determine highly qualified status in each of these additional core academic subjects following their first year of teaching.

**37. Who completes the survey when the district employs teachers through distance learning? The facilitator is on-site, but the instructor is teaching over Interactive Television (ITV).**

According to Administrative Rules of Montana 10.56.907, Distance, Online, and Technology Delivered Learning, a teacher licensed, in Montana or elsewhere, and endorsed in the subject taught must be either providing or facilitating the distance learning course. If the teacher providing the course via ITV is licensed, in Montana or elsewhere, and endorsed in that subject, then the facilitator on-site can be a licensed teacher endorsed in any subject or a paraprofessional. If that teacher delivering the distance course is not licensed and endorsed, then the facilitator on-site must be licensed and endorsed in the subject taught.

The facilitator, by definition, is not the sole provider and should fill out the survey by answering "None of the Above."

The ITV delivered class is counted as a high school credit by the receiving school district and the HQT status is determined by the qualification of the teacher teaching the ITV delivered core academic subject class from whatever district the ITV is broadcast. Such a circumstance requires the ITV receiving school to verify the HQT status of the teacher teaching that subject and to annually keep on file the HQT status of all teachers teaching distance, online and technology delivered classes.

**38. Does a business math class qualify as a core academic subject?**

If the student is earning a math credit toward graduation then the course qualifies as a core academic subject.

**39. If a district employs a special education teacher through a cooperative agency, with whom does the teacher file her survey?**

A special education teacher working from a cooperative agency completes the appropriate survey and files it with the district(s) where she is employed.